

# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

Protect marine life and habitat by responsibly recycling your fishing gear through one of the below programs:

- **Berkley Conservation Institute Recycling Program:** Mail your used monofilament line directly to Berkley's collection center at the following address: Berkley Recycling, 1900 18th Street, Spirit Lake, IA 51360. [www.berkley-fishing.com/about\\_conservation.php#brp](http://www.berkley-fishing.com/about_conservation.php#brp)
- **Reel In and Recycle! Monofilament Recycling Program by BoatU.S. Foundation:** Visit the website to find a recycling site near you or contact the BoatU.S. Foundation to learn how you can host a bin site. Contact [cleanwater@boatus.com](mailto:cleanwater@boatus.com) for more information. [www.boatus.com/foundation/Monofilament](http://www.boatus.com/foundation/Monofilament)
- **Fishing for Energy Program:** This program is a partnership between Covanta Energy, NOAA Marine Debris Program, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc. It provides disposal of old, derelict, and unwanted fishing gear free of charge. The gear is converted into clean, renewable electricity for local communities. Visit the website to find out how your community can participate. [www.nfwf.org/fishingforenergy](http://www.nfwf.org/fishingforenergy)

Printed on recycled paper.  
February 2010

For more information on  
marine debris visit  
[www.MarineDebris.noaa.gov](http://www.MarineDebris.noaa.gov)

For more information on marine  
mammals and sea turtles in the  
Northeast region visit  
[www.nero.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/)



# TACKLING MARINE DEBRIS:

Protecting marine  
mammals and sea turtles  
*in the*  
Northeast U.S.

NOAA Marine Debris Program  
NOAA Fisheries Northeast  
Regional Office



Photo: NOAA



## Marine debris is everyone's problem.

It affects everything from the environment to the economy; from fishing and navigation to human health and safety; from the tiniest coral polyps to giant blue whales.

As a recreational fisherman, **you can help** protect fish stocks from *ghostfishing* (when lost or discarded fishing gear continues to fish), ensure navigation safety (prevent vessel or gear entanglement in marine debris), and at the same time help keep marine mammals and sea turtles safe from harm caused by marine debris.

## Some easy tips

for preventing the impacts of marine debris:

- **Use reusable floats, not balloons, while fishing.** Balloons pop easily and become marine debris which can be ingested by sea turtles or other marine life and may lead to the animal's death.
- **Remember that it's illegal to tie-off to fixed commercial fishing gear (buoys or high flyers).** Tying off to this gear can result in the lines breaking, making it impossible for the gear to be retrieved, and leaving free floating line in the water—creating a navigational hazard and an entanglement threat to marine life.
- **Opt for other gear storage options instead of wet (at-sea) storage.** Wet storing your gear increases entanglement risk for marine mammals and sea turtles.

- **Remember that lost or abandoned fishing gear will continue to “ghostfish” long after you’ve left.** Research is beginning to quantify and show that ghostfishing has a significant impact on fisheries and marine resources. Discarded or abandoned trap and gillnet gear also poses serious entanglement risks to marine life.
- **Be sure to retrieve your mooring system (anchor and ball) before returning to port.** Mooring systems are known to entangle marine mammals.
- **Try to fish in areas where there are no marine mammals or sea turtles.**

Hooks can be ingested or lodged into the animal's skin or mouth or line may entangle an animal resulting in hooks and/or line breaking away from the gear. If the line is broken, floating pieces may also be ingested by sea turtles or marine mammals, which may cause injury or death. Casting line onto or trolling gear over marine mammals or sea turtles is considered harassment and is against the law.



Loggerhead sea turtle on derelict fishing nets. Photo: NOAA



Humpback whale caught in recreational tuna gear. Photo: Whale Center of New England



Seal pup entangled in gillnet gear. Photo: Whale Center of New England



Kemp's Ridley sea turtle with ingested recreational hook. Photo: MDNR

**Entanglements** can result in drowning, starvation, or loss of flippers or tails.

**Ingestion** of fishing line may result in illness or death.

**Fishing line** thrown in garbage cans can still pose a threat when blown out by the wind or taken out by wildlife scavengers.

**Monofilament** is a strand of strong, flexible plastic used for fishing, and the majority of it is non-degradable in water!

**To report** stranded, injured, entangled, or dead whales, seals, dolphins, or sea turtles, call NOAA's Northeast Stranding and Entanglement Hotline at 1-866-755-NOAA (6622) or contact your local stranding network partner. For a list of partners visit [www.nero.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/stranding/](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/stranding/)

**To report** law violations, call NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement 1-800-853-1964.